

POPULAR GOVERNMENT

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INSTITUTE of GOVERNMENT

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

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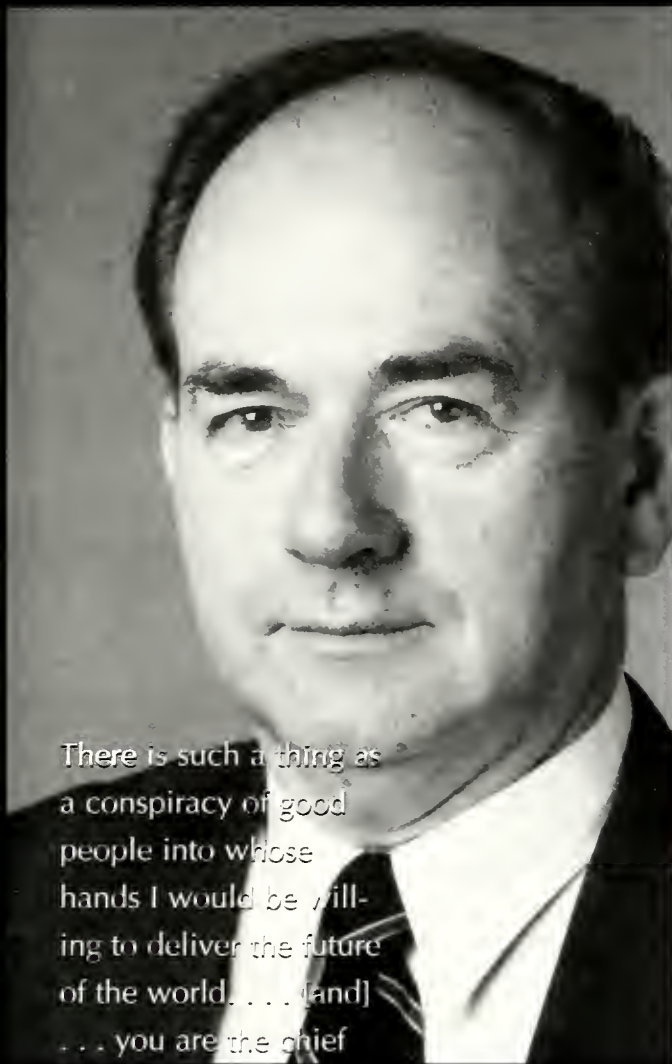
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Positions





There is such a thing as a conspiracy of good people into whose hands I would be willing to deliver the future of the world. . . . [and] . . . you are the chief conspirator, with the great gift of drawing good out of others. . . . you always have a coterie of young student government leaders to introduce around, the editors and governors and cabinet members in process of becoming. They are under your influence and glad to be—as I was, John, and am.

Charles Kuralt,
December 1991

John Sanders, Adviser to Leaders Past and Future

Robert P. Joyce



Quick! Beside which eye did President James Monroe have a mole? In school you learned what George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and Abraham Lincoln looked like. But James Monroe? He looked a lot like James Madison, didn't he? Or Patrick Henry? The truth is, you don't have any idea what James Monroe looked like, except that he looked more or less like an English gentleman of those times.

John Lassiter Sanders, alternately director of the Institute of Government, vice president of the university, adviser to governors past and to the young men and women who will be the governors future, knows. He is a legal scholar, never formally trained as an art historian, but he knows.

Today, because of Sanders's breadth of knowledge, an 1829 portrait of Monroe, who was once secretary of state, hangs prominently in the U.S. Department of State in Washington, D.C. and, in fact, recently hung in the office of Secretary of State George Schultz. Sanders recognized Monroe, even though the antiques dealer selling the portrait had identified it only as that of "An English Gentleman," because painter Chester Harding had included the mole.

Sanders saw what no one else had seen. To a generation of North Carolina public officials, that fact could be no surprise. Those here at the Institute of Government who worked with John Sanders just smiled at a knowing smile. Bill Friday got a chuckle. Sanders had done it again, and no one could be quite sure how.

The author is an Institute of Government faculty member whose fields of expertise include higher education. A version of this article appeared in the November/December 1995 issue of the *Carolina Alumni Review*. Our thanks to the *Review* for its consent to publish this version in *Popular Government*.

Early Intellectual Development

It is true that Four Oaks, N.C. (in Johnston County, just down U.S. 301 from Smithfield) had the largest consolidated high school in the world in the mid 1940s. At least that's what the folks in Four Oaks said back then. But the curriculum leaned more toward subjects related to tobacco growing than to art history, and that's probably not where Sanders gained the erudition necessary to pluck Monroe from obscurity.

It is clear, though, that Sanders took from that little town the best of what it could offer. His father's people had come to Johnston County in the 1750s, and his mother's people arrived just after the American Revolution. Sanders was born in downtown Four Oaks—in those days if you were in Four Oaks, you were in downtown Four Oaks—in 1927 in the house his father had built early in the century. He grew up working in his father's hardware store. The family prospered. One brother succeeded dad in the hardware business and another became a dentist, for instance, but none shared the young Sanders's interest in, or eye for, art and history.

Interest in Architecture

His high school graduation year, 1944, was the last year that high school in North Carolina included only eleven grades, and Sanders was too young for the military. He enrolled instead at State College in Raleigh, planning to turn his interest in art into a career as an architect. Though it didn't turn out that way exactly, a term paper Sanders wrote on the architecture of the North Carolina State Capitol, one of the state's historical treasures, became the cornerstone of an interest that has resulted, a half-century later, in the building's preservation.

But back to James Monroe.

Combining Art and Government

At the end of that year at State, with war still raging in the Pacific, Sanders, then age seventeen, enlisted in the navy. "I've never been one to question Truman's use of the atomic bomb," he says. "Otherwise, I would have been part of the assault on Japan. As it was, the largest ship I boarded in my navy career was a whaleboat on the Susquehanna River."

After the navy Sanders left State College, and the notion of a career in steel and glass, for The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC-CH), where his

interest in art merged with his study of history (maybe it was at Carolina that he learned to recognize Monroe). An initial taste of government—election as student body president in 1950—paved the way for the career that led the *Charlotte Observer* in 1994 to label him "North Carolina's Unsung Hero." After three years of law school at UNC-CH, it was time for a break from Chapel Hill, and Sanders accepted a clerkship with Chief Judge John J. Parker of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit, in Charlotte. Then came a stint in private law practice with Manning & Fulton (now Manning, Fulton & Skinner) in Raleigh.

Personal Life

Maybe, in fact, it was Sanders's wife, Ann, who taught him to recognize James Monroe.

When Ann Beal married John Sanders, just after he finished law school, she was a staff member of the North Carolina Department of Archives and History. During their early life together, Ann and John would travel for pleasure—throughout Johnston County, in Virginia, to Philadelphia—to study history and architecture. A 1966 photograph from the *Durham Herald* shows the couple with their then-four-year-old daughter, Tracy. In front of them on the coffee table are prints of paintings by Michelangelo.

As the family grew (their three children all are grown now), the couple nourished their interest in history and art. They continued their roaming, in antique shops and junk stores, looking for, and sometimes finding, items of unexpected artistic or historical interest. This time it was maps. The next time it was pottery. One time it was James Monroe.

The First Institute Career

Albert Coates, founder of the Institute of Government, came calling in 1956, summoning Sanders to the Institute. Coates is fondly remembered in Chapel Hill as a forceful character, full of love for The University of North Carolina and the Tar Heel state, boundless in energy, and tireless in advancement of his vision of an Institute of Government. In a memorial tribute to Coates many years later, Sanders himself would characterize it as a vision of a university "corps of able scholar-teacher-writer-advisers" in service to the public officials of the state and its cities and counties.

Unable to persuade his fellow law faculty to take on

this public service role, Coates, in conjunction with his wife, Gladys, launched the Institute as a personal enterprise in 1932; they sacrificed their own resources and devoted almost all of their time to it. In 1942 Coates persuaded the university to embrace the Institute.

When Sanders arrived in 1956, the Institute was undergoing two major transitions. First, the Knapp Building—still the Institute's home—was just opening. Visitors to campus from the east were greeted by the easy Georgian charm of the Institute headquarters. In 1956, when the Institute faculty numbered fourteen, the building seemed spacious. Today, housing a faculty of thirty-eight and a staff of about sixty, the old building is feeling the strain, and plans are under way for major renovation and expansion.

Second, in 1957 the professional staff of the Institute, who had been university employees since 1942, were made regular university faculty, so they would hold regular academic rank and be eligible to earn tenure.

Coates saw Sanders as "one of the ablest students in my Law School classes during my nearly forty years of teaching." He said that a study Sanders prepared while still a law student, on the history and powers of the governor's office, was "so comprehensive and useful that Governor Luther Hodges publicly referred to it as an invaluable service when he took office."

From 1956 to 1961 Sanders proved worthy of Coates's praise:

- He assisted the North Carolina Constitutional Commission that reported a proposed new state constitution to the General Assembly. (No new constitution appeared as a result, but a decade later Sanders was to reprise his role and the General Assembly largely accepted the 1969 work of the North Carolina State Constitutional study commission; the state's current constitution is the result). Through this work Sanders became an authority on the state constitution, a status that continues almost forty years later.
- He handled the principal legal work for a series of commissions on reorganization of state government. In this capacity, among other accomplishments, he drafted the legislation creating the state's first Department of Administration.
- He became the state's leading authority on legislative representation, aiding the work of the General Assembly as it moved away from the days when Camden County had almost as much voice in the legislature as did Mecklenburg.

In 1961 North Carolina took a bold step forward in

higher education as a result of the work of the Governor's Commission on Education Beyond the High School, which recommended the creation of the community college system and a process for the expansion of The University of North Carolina from three campuses to six. Sanders took a year's leave from the Institute to lead the staff work for the commission.

The Second Institute Career

Albert Coates turned sixty-five and retired as director of the Institute in 1962. Chancellor William B. Aycock was familiar with Sanders's work on the Commission on Education Beyond the High School and tapped him as director.

Coates had been idiosyncratic in his management style. "The creative chaos of an Albert Coates" was followed, almost by conscious plan, by "the steady administration of a John Sanders," as longtime Institute colleague Milton Heath remembers. Sanders's immediate goal was to set the Institute on a course of long-term stability.

"When I was named director," he recalls, "the only fiscal fact that I knew about the Institute was my own salary. I immediately set out to inform myself and the faculty of the Institute's financial condition." The days of crisis management—a mode that had characterized Coates's style—were over.

Sanders's belief in the work of the Institute rivaled that of Coates. Carolina students from those days (and through much of the 1970s) might remember the Institute primarily for the busloads of crew-cut Highway Patrol cadets who were in training at the Knapp Building and lunching at the Carolina Inn. But Albert Coates's vision was broader from the very beginning, and by the early 1960s the Institute was involved in all aspects of state and local government, as Sanders's work with state government reorganization, constitutional revision, and legislative representation demonstrates. The net Coates had cast was wide; and Sanders was dedicated to excellence in service to that very broad constituency.

Vice President of the University

In 1971 Governor Robert Scott pushed for reorganization of The University of North Carolina. The UNC system had grown to six campuses with the addition of Wilmington, Charlotte, and Asheville to the

old three-campus Consolidated University. The General Assembly had extended to all the other state colleges (such as Western Carolina and Fayetteville State) the designation "university" and was beginning a process to allow those new universities to offer doctoral degrees. The boards of trustees of the UNC system and of the regional universities were in competition with one another and with the State Board of Higher Education. In the fall of 1971 the General Assembly completely reshaped higher education, eliminating the higher education board and bringing all the UNC institutions and all the newly minted regional universities into one University of North Carolina under one board of governors, the system that prevails today.

The first person to address the new board, to explain the law under which it would work, was John Sanders, director of the Institute of Government. Arnold King, a popular longtime UNC administrator, later remembered it: "His performance lasted more than two hours and was a classic illustration of a brilliant legal mind in action."

Transition to New System

Sanders says that the transition to the new structure worked for three reasons. First, half the members of the new UNC Board of Governors came from the board of trustees of the old six-campus university. They already understood multicampus issues. They were experienced in determining which matters they needed to control centrally and which they should delegate to local governing boards at the campus level (or to the chancellors). Second, the selection of William Friday (even then the longtime president of the Consolidated University) as the president of the new system provided continuity and trusted leadership. And third, the economy of the state was in good shape. The General Assembly was able to ensure that the reorganization cost no individual institution money.

As Bill Friday began to staff the new team to administer this greatly expanded university, he turned to John Sanders. The association went way back. When Sanders was president of the student body he had worked with Friday, then dean of students. Like Aycock, Friday was thoroughly familiar with Sanders's work on the state structure for education beyond the high school. More immediately, Sanders had been a critical steadying hand during the special session of the General Assembly in which the university reorganization was passed, shaping coherent legislation in the midst of a fierce political fight. And, most re-

cently, Friday valued Sanders's work as the first chairman of the University Faculty Assembly, one of the first organizations to expand from the old Consolidated University base to the new sixteen-campus base. Sanders had the broad vision Friday needed, and in 1973 Friday named him vice president for planning.

Development of New Affirmative Action Plan

Sanders had one more special competence that Friday needed. He had recently chaired a special committee that had prepared the first affirmative action plan for the campus at Chapel Hill. The desegregation controversy between UNC and the Department of Health, Education and Welfare was beginning to burn red hot. HEW was pressuring UNC to develop a plan to eliminate inequities resulting from the old *de jure* (by law) system of segregation in higher education. A federal appeals court ruled that HEW was not putting enough pressure on, and on November 10, 1973, less than two weeks after Sanders came on board, HEW rejected UNC's plan. The development of a new plan became his initial task.

"HEW was pursuing two ultimately contradictory goals," Sanders recalls, "and no one in authority in HEW or the courts acknowledged the contradiction. The first was to eliminate from the current system the vestiges of racial segregation from the former system which was by law segregated. The second was to preserve and enhance the historically black institutions, which met needs that their supporters feared the white institutions could not.

"The black institutions themselves were the single greatest vestige of segregation, and the ruthless response to the 'vestiges' issue would have been to do away with them. That was not considered for three reasons. One, the state needed all the educational institutions it already had. Two, the political reality of the black vote made it not feasible to abolish the institutions. As a related matter, Elizabeth City State and others like it were main contributors to the local payroll. Three, HEW would not have approved such a response. That would have been seen as 'loading the solution on the backs of the victims.'"

The result of Sanders's efforts was *The North Carolina State Plan for the Further Elimination of Racial Duality in the Public Postsecondary Education Systems*, which the Board of Governors adopted in substantially its original form and submitted to HEW. HEW's consideration of this plan was complicated by a seem-

ingly unrelated matter: whether North Carolina should have a School of Veterinary Medicine, and, if so, which campus would house it.

Sanders recalls that at the time that the question of a vet school arose, the Board of Governors had recently been forced to accept, over great initial concerns, the notion of a four-year medical school at East Carolina University. When the board perceived that the development of a vet school was politically inevitable, it wanted to take charge of the course of events rather than react to it, as it had been forced to do in the medical school situation. So Sanders was given the task of studying the vet school issue and preparing a recommendation. The report stands out peculiarly today among his list of scholarly publications on constitutional law and legislative apportionment: *Veterinary Medical Education for North Carolina*.

That report recommended a vet school at North Carolina State University (NCSU), which had the necessary academic strengths and a history of running complex organizations. In any case, Sanders recalls, the Board of Governors could see that the General Assembly was going to put the vet school there, regardless. It was an instance, he says, of an educationally justified decision matching the politically inevitable.

But the vet school, however politically inevitable, was a land mine for the university's relationship with HEW in working out the desegregation plan. Alumni and friends of North Carolina Agricultural & Technical State University pointed out that locating the vet school at their campus would be a step in eliminating racial duality, doubtless attracting white students to the historically black institution. Consequently, the Board of Governors' decision to place the vet school in Raleigh was one of several factors that made agreement between UNC and HEW so difficult to achieve. Only in 1981 was the matter resolved, and only then as a consent decree settling a lawsuit in federal court.

And here is the irony: More than \$2 million in legal fees later, the terms of that consent decree are remarkably similar to Sanders's 1974 plan.

With the desegregation work in hand, Sanders could turn to his main task: helping the Board of Governors to develop an academic program plan for each of the sixteen institutions of this huge new university. What would be taught where? How would authority be granted for new degree programs? What should be the undergraduate and graduate enrollment levels at the various campuses? The result was a comprehensive study called *Long Range Planning* covering the years 1976 to 1981.

Third Institute Career

When Henry Lewis, Sanders's successor as director of the Institute of Government, announced his retirement in 1978, the chancellor appointed the entire Institute faculty as a search committee for a successor. In tribute to Sanders's outstanding earlier service as director, the faculty recommended that the chancellor name him again. From 1978 to 1992 Sanders served as director of the Institute of Government, with the same devotion to the work of the Institute that had characterized his first tenure, and inspiring the same loyalty and dedication from the faculty who served under him.

"Sanders looked ahead," longtime Institute faculty member Warren Jake Wicker recalls. "His knowledge of the state and its government enabled him to anticipate both public needs and the probable governmental response. His judgments were informed and balanced. He was fair. He listened. He was open to suggestions. He sought to empower his colleagues and supported them to the fullest extent possible."

"His integrity and commitment are the standards by which we will continue to measure ourselves," says Michael R. Smith, who took over as director when Sanders retired in 1992.

When Sanders became director the first time, the Institute faculty numbered nineteen; when he retired from that position in 1992, the number was forty-one. A faculty twice the size translates to something like an administrative burden twice as large, but Sanders found time for duties other than merely running the Institute.

Example: By 1979 there was a serious question about whether the state's community college system should remain under the State Board of Education, whose main business is the public schools. The system had grown on the foundation laid by the work of Sanders and others with the Commission on Education Beyond the High School nearly twenty years earlier, and when the Community College and Technical Institute Planning Commission was established, Sanders was a member.

Example: Governor Hunt appointed him to serve on the Commission on the Future of North Carolina from 1981 to 1982.

Example: He served as a member of the Board of Directors of the Research Triangle Foundation of North Carolina beginning in 1984, as well as on its executive committee.

Example: He served as a member of the board of

directors of The University of North Carolina Press beginning in 1982.

Example: He continues to this day as an adviser, in formal and informal ways, to legislators and executive branch leaders.

And we haven't gotten yet to his work on the campus at Carolina.

The Face of the Campus

Keep in mind James Monroe, but for the moment turn your attention to Ruffin Wirt Tomlinson of Johnston County. Tomlinson entered Carolina as a freshman in 1839, graduated in 1842, and died two years later. His was an unremarkable career as a student, except that he kept a journal of his senior year that provides a unique glimpse into the nature of everyday student life in those times. By 1953 that journal was in the hands of Emma Tomlinson, who just happened to be a cousin of John Sanders. In 1953, while Sanders was in law school, the *North Carolina Historical Review* published Sanders's edited and annotated version of the journal. His work, weaving the journal into the context of the history of the university, is an early clue to his love for UNC, which was to grow with time.

Early History

Most tellingly, the *Historical Review* piece begins with a sketch entitled, "Campus of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, ca. 1841," ranging from Old East and the Old Well to the Eagle Hotel, along Franklin Street and Cameron Avenue. Sanders could not have known then that thirty years later he would be named chairman of the building and grounds committee at UNC-CH, with direct responsibilities relating to those same buildings (except of course the Eagle Hotel).

The chancellor appoints the buildings and grounds committee to advise on locations for new buildings and expansions of existing ones, on selection of architects, and on the external designs produced by the architects. There is probably no person more knowledgeable about the physical development of UNC-Chapel Hill than the one-time would-be architect John Sanders.

The university began, back in 1793, with two great advantages, Sanders says. One was a physical advantage: its location in the woods with room to expand. The other was a human advantage: its orderly planning from the earliest point. As Sanders outlined in an article in the bicentennial issue of the *Carolina*

Alumni Review, from the first bricks laid in Old East through the Civil War, all buildings were aligned on coherent north-south and east-west axes. The fifteen buildings constructed between the Civil War and World War I were placed without comprehensive planning but in suitable spots. In 1920, with enrollment poised to boom, the university adopted a comprehensive plan for the areas now called Polk Place and Upper and Lower Quads. This plan imposed not only a scheme for the locations and scale of buildings but also a requirement of stylistic conformity to what Sanders calls "a thoroughly synthetic tradition of 'Colonial' design." That architectural tradition was not broken until the construction of Chase Cafeteria on South Campus in 1965. The 1920 plan was completed with the construction of Dey Hall in 1962.

The years from 1962 through 1990, like the period before World War I, proceeded without a comprehensive plan. "Buildings and road locations were chosen in the light of limited information and often under sharp pressures to get a project under way. Available parking lots often were seen as the best sites for new structures," Sanders recalled in the *Alumni Review*. "[N]o overall plan sought to anticipate, rationalize and try to accommodate all foreseeable competing claims for building sites on a finite campus that was rapidly filling up."

Long-Range Plan

Sanders says that the chief success of the buildings and grounds committee during his tenure as chairman was the initiation and implementation of a long-range plan for the central campus, the *1991 Guide to Physical Development [for] The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill*, which sets out policies to guide future construction, including maintaining open space, preserving and respecting the integrity of the historic campus, and emphasizing the primacy of pedestrian use of the campus by pushing a substantial amount of vehicular traffic off campus. Even as it was being finalized, however, the plan was amended, for purposes such as siting the George Watts Hill Alumni Center next to Kenan Stadium in an otherwise protected open space. And the plan has not faced completely smooth sailing, with community opposition to proposals to shift some noncampus traffic off roads crossing the campus and onto roads near the campus edge.

From the first, Sanders says, university officials made decisions that in retrospect seem unfortunate, such as an early decision to sell off university lots

along Franklin Street. And, more often, university officials, "like their fellow mortals," Sanders says, "are entrapped by their times, experience, and knowledge." The early planners could not have foreseen an enrollment of 25,000 students. The early hospital builders could not have foreseen the complex of research facilities now grouped along Manning Drive. Some decisions today will suffer similarly in the scrutiny of successive generations.

The Heart of the Chapel Hill Campus

As influential as Sanders has been on the face of the campus, his main contribution here has been to its heart: the students who study here. Bryan Hassel, a former Carolina student body president, recalls in a 1992 letter one particular instance of Sanders's impact on these students.

"I remember when there were plans for Old East dormitory to become an office building, following the fate of so many of UNC's historic structures. You were there to counsel students on how to preserve the old dorm, and your efforts paid off handsomely for students and for the university. Of course, everyone knows you've got a soft spot for old buildings, and that part of you probably provided some of your motivation to save Old East. But I think the incident shows how vigilantly you looked out for students' interests, and how your watchfulness made a difference at UNC."

Until they gutted the old cafeteria at the Carolina Inn—and the sad day they said they'll never reopen it—John Sanders was a fixture there, having lunch with one or more undergraduates as they talked about home, or politics, or North Carolina government, or antiques, or (to show the depth of Sanders's influence) Gilbert and Sullivan light opera. Sanders sought them out, giving their college years a depth and texture they would otherwise have missed. For these young people, dinner with John and Ann began as an educational experience of mentor to protégé and developed into friendship. These alumni leap at the opportunity to praise this teacher who never taught them a course, this man of great reserve who sought them out and nurtured them. John Sanders

- "instilled in me a sense of place and understanding with regards to the university and its duties to the state and the obligations of those who benefit from the university"—Keith Kapp, class of 1973, Raleigh
- "created a fire in my belly for doing all I can for the

Old North State"—David Curtis Smith, class of 1991, Durham

- "is not only the adult who has most influenced my life since I came to Carolina, but also a true friend"—Jim Copland IV, class of 1994, Burlington
- "helped bridge the gap between my classes and the university for me, something which I appreciate very deeply and which I will never forget"—Mike Dickey, class of 1992, Elizabethtown
- "has been mentor and guide to generations of college students, educators and legislators. [He treats] them all the same, with respect. This suggests not only that [he has] been around a long time—a very long time—but also that [he has] a rare sense of duty"—Kevin Bunn, class of 1986, Durham
- "became more than a friend to me. [He] became a father. No words can fully express my thanks."—George Wayne Goodwin, class of 1989, Hamlet

In such informal friendships with students, and in his formal work as the faculty adviser for the Dialectic and Philanthropic Literary Societies, Sanders has brought the university closer to its students.

Guardian of a Grand Old Lady

John Sanders is inseparable from the university: student, faculty member, administrator, adviser. But still there was that year back during World War II, the year that involved a term paper about the old State Capitol Building. Between then and 1971, Sanders, with Ann Beal as an active partner and his love of art and architecture as inspiration, energetically pursued an understanding of the State Capitol that no one else possessed. He spent arduous hours in the state archives, digging out and interpreting what could be found from the early eighteenth century and the passing decades. Traveling at his own expense to Philadelphia, New York, and Scotland, he researched the lives and work of the principal architects and builders of the Capitol.

In its earliest days, the Capitol housed all of state government. By the middle of the twentieth century, most peripheral offices had moved out, leaving principally the governor and the House and Senate. Then in 1963 the legislature moved out to the new Legislative Building, and the governor moved out to allow renovation work to proceed. Governor James Houshouser decided not to move back in. "For a time," Sanders later wrote, "the Secretary of State, of all the original tenants, kept lonely vigil in the Capitol."

In 1971 Governor Robert Scott persuaded the General Assembly to appropriate money for a major renovation. Sanders volunteered as a consultant on the historical accuracy of the renovations and worked closely with the architects. He played a large role in convincing Governor James Hunt, when the renovations were completed, to move his working offices into the old Capitol, to turn it once again into a vital seat of government.

In 1976 Sanders and a group of others founded the State Capitol Foundation, to continue the restoration of the old building beyond the level that the General Assembly was willing to underwrite. Sanders served as president of the foundation for fifteen years and oversaw extensive restoration of existing 1840 legislative furnishings, the re-creation of several historic office areas, the restoration of Thomas Sully's 1818 portrait of George Washington, and many other projects. In 1986 the foundation members surprised Sanders with the creation of a trust fund in his honor for further work with the grand old Capitol.

North Carolina is the richer for his efforts, and the State Capitol is a wonderful old building to visit. And for his efforts John Sanders is the recipient of the highest awards available from the Historic Preservation Society of North Carolina, the American Association for State and Local History, and the North Carolina Chapter of the Victorian Society in America.

Benefactor of the University

When people began to think about how the bicentennial of the founding of the university at Chapel Hill might be celebrated, they wondered who knew the most about what had been done at the 150th anniversary. John Sanders would be an excellent guess.

He knew that the 150th had featured myriad publications, and he encouraged the chancellor to create such a permanent legacy for the Chapel Hill campus in association with the bicentennial. In part from that nudging came the new edition of William Powell's illustrated history of the campus; William Snider's one-volume history, *Light on the Hill*; and the soon-to-be-published *University in the Twentieth Century*, by Edward Holley (all published by the University of North Carolina Press).

On the bicentennial planning committee, Sanders encouraged the acquisition of ceremonial regalia of various sorts, physical emblems that could be handed down from leader to leader, from generation to gen-

eration, within the university. He suggested that UNC-Chapel Hill should have a staff, to be carried by the faculty marshal on the highest ceremonial occasions. The committee authorized him to proceed on that notion, and he and his wife designed a staff, had it made, and gave it to the university. The crown is a silver rendering of the Old Well. An inscribed silver sleeve covers the top of the shaft. The shaft itself is made from an original 1822 oak timber from Old West, removed in the 1990s renovation. The staff was carried for the first time, at the head of the faculty procession, in the 1993 bicentennial celebration in Kenan Stadium that featured the speech by President Clinton.

A second gift from the Sanderses to the university is a cornerstone for Old East. At a corner on Cameron Avenue, one face reads 1793 (the date of original construction) and the other reads 1993 (the date of the extensive recent renovation).

Another gift is a chancellor's medallion, cast in silver, bearing a high-relief version of the university seal. The collar from which the medallion hangs is a series of silver plates, each inscribed with the name of a former chancellor or reserved for the names of future chancellors.

These gifts in connection with the bicentennial only begin to hint at the Sanderses' generosity, to the university, the state, and the nation. The Ackland Art Museum boasts late-seventeenth-century drawings and a collection of North Carolina pottery donated by Ann; the State Capitol and the Governor's Mansion feature antiques and furnishings the Sanderses have given. The National Portrait Gallery in Washington displays their sculpture of General Andrew Jackson on horseback and their likeness of Edward Everett, who spoke before Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address and was well known as a philosopher, U.S. senator, and candidate for vice president of the United States. Their busts of President James Garfield and Daniel Webster are at the White House.

Which brings us back to James Monroe.

Spotting Monroe

One day in 1978 Sanders was browsing in Whitehall Antiques in Chapel Hill. You never know, there might be something especially interesting. His eyes fell on a portrait labeled, "An English Gentleman."

"It's a subdued painting," he says. "Probably if Monroe had been wearing a bright red jacket someone would already have bought it for decorative value."



But no one had, and no one knew who it was. Except John Sanders, of course. Sanders recognized Monroe from engravings and other representations, which he had seen over the years, some with the mole and some without.

Sanders suggested to the store owner that she contact the Monroe Museum in Virginia. She did, but the museum officials dithered. Meanwhile Sanders, in New York on a business trip, visited the Frick Art Reference Library and found a photograph of this very portrait, confirming its identity (down to clearly showing a small damaged spot). The photograph had been made in the late 1920s, but the portrait itself had been lost to the art world.

After long investigation the story came to this: in 1970 a lawyer in New York had placed the portrait, properly identified in the auction catalogue as Monroe, in a lot for auction at a reputable auction house, but at the last minute he withdrew it. A few years later the lawyer's widow offered the portrait at the same auction house, but she wasn't sure who it was and the auction people did not realize it was the same portrait that they had had previously. A wholesale dealer bought it and in 1978 sold it to Whitehall.

Its identity was lost until it fell under the gaze of a university administrator whose view of the world is very broad.



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